



IN NATHAN'S MEMORY

\$50K raised for
slain soldier **D1**

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POSTMEDIA

Shuffle at Veterans Affairs leaves Legion unimpressed

Fantino's demotion called 'a political
move' as O'Toole named as successor

BY JON FEKETE
OTTAWA CITIZEN

ing to mend a threadbare re-
ship with Canada's veterans,
e Minister Stephen Harper
ed embattled minister Julian
tino out of Veterans Affairs
day and promoted rising star
former Canadian Forces mem-
Erin O'Toole to the post.
he file had become a political

vulnerability for the Conservative
government in recent months, due
in part to missteps by the gaffe-
prone Fantino. Replacing him
gives the prime minister an op-
portunity to start over at Veterans
Affairs while also bringing a fresh
face into his cabinet.

It's a meteoric rise for O'Toole, a
41-year-old former lawyer and mili-
tary officer first elected as an MP in
late 2012. The new minister faces

enormous challenges, however,
including earning back the trust of
veterans fed up with the govern-
ment. Some veterans' advocates,
and the opposition parties, say a
new minister won't change the
Conservatives' message or policies,
which they feel have shortchanged
many former soldiers.

The ministers were sworn in to
their new portfolios Monday in a
small ceremony at Rideau Hall.

O'Toole, a former Canadian Forces
helicopter navigator, was parlia-
mentary secretary to the interna-
tional trade minister before the
shuffle, but had often been called

on to comment for the government
on veterans issues.

"It's an honour for me to serve
our veterans," O'Toole told report-
ers on the way out of Rideau Hall.
"I served, myself, and they're some
of our finest."

O'Toole earned his wings as the
tactical co-ordinator aboard Sea
King helicopters and was posted
to Canadian Forces Base Shearwa-
ter in Nova Scotia. The Sea Kings
are based on Canadian warships
and their primary role is hunting
submarines.

SEE FANTINO ON **A6**

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